



Refuge

Reflections

Winter 2004

Seney National Wildlife Refuge

Special Events

Snowfest 2004 Saturday, February 7th

Visitor Center - Indoors 10am - 4pm

- * check out snowshoes and skis free of charge
- * sign up for the snowshoe races!
- * gift store will be open today
- * warm up with complimentary coffee, cocoa, and cookies

Outdoors 10am - 4pm

- * horse-drawn and dogsled rides in the afternoon
- * snowshoe races at 3pm
- * outdoor games
- * make snow ice cream (get supplies inside)

Co-sponsored by Seney NWR, the Seney Natural History Association, Northland Outfitters in Germfask, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore and the Hiawatha National Forest, Munising.

Winter Film Festival

Tuesdays: Feb. 10, 17, 24, and March 3

Enjoy selections from the International Wildlife Film Festival. Films begin promptly at 6:30pm. Refreshments provided by the Seney Natural History Association.

Manager's Corner

My father always said that the older you get the faster time passes by. Well I am just 41 and as fast as this year went by I am afraid to blink. I started off the year with a trip to Pelican Island, Florida to commemorate the 100th birthday of the National Wildlife Refuge System. It was a grand affair that celebrated the accomplishments of the past century and highlight the partnerships that will carry us into the future. While I was vacationing in the land of fun-in-the-sun, the staff was busy back in the Upper Peninsula winter-wonderland planning our centennial celebration. On May 24th we hosted our Refuge System birthday party,

complete with a time capsule internment ceremony. The response from folks in the surrounding communities was heart warming. It was a great opportunity for me to meet many people from the area, many of whom had worked at the Refuge. It is nice to work at a place as appreciated as Seney National Wildlife Refuge.

The rest of the year raced by. The maintenance staff reclaimed the dikes and roads from the wrath of winter to make them ready for spring visitors. We replaced the roofs on five buildings and built six

earthen dams to plug the Walsh Ditch above C-3 pool. Then, before we knew it, it was time to prepare for hunting season and winterize.



Centennial Celebration: Jim Kurth, Assistant Director of the National Wildlife Refuge System addresses the crowd (top photo). Maintenance Workers Terry Papple and Lawrence Zellar lower the time capsule (bottom right). Refuge Ranger Marianne Kronk takes a turn burying the time capsule (bottom left).



Al Menk



Refuge Reflections is a free informational and educational service of Seney National Wildlife Refuge, published through a generous donation from the Seney Natural History Association.

Christine Casselman



Seney
National Wildlife Refuge
1674 Refuge Entrance Rd.
Seney, MI 49883

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[Http://midwest.fws.gov/seney](http://midwest.fws.gov/seney)

**Visitor Center
open 7 days a week,
9am to 5pm,
May 15 - Oct. 15**

REFUGE STAFF

Refuge Manager
Tracy Casselman

Assistant Manager
Gary Heet

Wildlife Biologist
Mike Tansy

Administrative Tech.
Laural Tansy

Forester
Greg Corace

Prescribed Fire Specialist
Gary Lindsay

Automotive Worker
Lawrence Zellar

Maintenance Worker
Terry Papple

Seasonal Refuge Guide
Jennifer McDonough

Refuge Operations Specialist
Heather Adams

Interpretive Specialist
& Newsletter Editor
Marianne Kronk

*cover loon photo
by Joyce Fawley*

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Chris Spencer



Martin Rickard



The biological accomplishment of the year was invasive buckthorn control. We teamed up with the Michigan DNR to cut and apply herbicide to buckthorn on our adjacent properties just north of the Refuge Entrance Road. They provided the labor, in the form of a prison crew from Cusino and we provided the pesticide applicators. Together, we cleared and treated buckthorn on approximately 20 acres. The piles of brush will be burned in the spring and the seedlings will be treated chemically or with fire.



Glossy Buckthorn cuttings piled up for disposal.

The fire program got off to a fast start. As soon as the snow melted and the grass dried, the fields at the Chicago and Conlin Farms were set ablaze to set back the woody vegetation and recycle nutrients. Within a week, a lush green carpet appeared providing forage for deer migrating back to the Refuge from winter yards and black bear coming out of hibernation. Then the crew went north to

Volunteers

Volunteers help the Refuge accomplish its mission in a variety of ways. They greet visitors and help them plan their stay, staff activity booths during special events, lead nature programs, conduct wildlife surveys, complete maintenance and building projects, and do research.

With the sponsorship of the Seney Natural History Association, the Refuge hires interns and apprentices each season. Internships in Biology and Visitor Services last 12 weeks, and interns are provided with housing and a \$150 weekly stipend. Apprentices in Visitor Services stay at the Refuge for 24 weeks and receive a raise in stipend during the second 12 week period.

For information on Volunteering or Internships please call: 906-586-9851 x16

Manager's Corner, continued...

the Diversion Farm for a burn to enhance openland bird habitat (e.g, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Bobolink, etc.). By mid-summer they were burning the impoundments to control woody vegetation and promote the growth of sedges used by Yellow Rails. Then it was out west to help with the wild-fires.



Refuge Forester Greg Corace on a prescribed burn at Conlin Farm.

To help gather data for future planning, the Seney Natural History Association collected data from deer hunters using the Refuge. Hunters filled out questionnaires and were required to bring their deer to be checked at the Refuge headquarters. They contacted 215 hunters and checked in 21 deer. From this information we learned that nearly 300 people deer hunt on the Refuge and most of them come here because they can have a quiet, traditional hunt without interference from bait and ATV's. What surprised me was that 70 percent of our deer hunters reside below the Mackinac Bridge.

With winter comes a slower pace. A time to prepare year-end reports and plan activities for the rebirth of spring. Our efforts for the next year will be in preparation for the Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan, which we are scheduled to begin in the fall. This is a 15-year Plan that will require assemblage of a massive amount of information and extensive public outreach.

I wish to conclude by thanking the many people (staff, volunteers, and supporters) who make Seney Refuge such a wonderful place. In this year of celebration you have exemplified the reasons the National Wildlife Refuge System has grown from a tiny island in south Florida to a thriving system of 540 special places preserved for wildlife. Your hard work, dedication, enthusiasm and love of the resource are what make the difference.

The CCC's Changed My Life



George Orlich joined the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) shortly after he graduated from High School. There were few jobs at that time except for work in the mines, and he preferred to stay 'on top.' He made the 250 mile train trip to Seney with about a 125 other young men from the west end of the Upper Peninsula. From there, they were transported to the Germfask CCC Camp, where they were put to work putting

out forest fires using shovels, grub hoes, and axes for tools.



Mr. Orlich moved on to become company clerk, but grew tired of office work and eventually became a heavy equipment operator. The experience he gained through working in the CCC's and his service as a Corporal in the U.S. Army during World War II led to a career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at Seney Refuge. At the Refuge, George continued to build on the CCC's work that created water impoundments (known as pools), and contributed to Refuge and wildlife habitat improvement in many ways over his long career. George retired in 1973, but is still a part of our Refuge family - often stopping by for staff get-togethers or to share his experiences from the early days.



A recent picture of George Orlich (inset at right), and the Driggs River Bridge opening on October 20, 1971. From left to right are Maintenance Worker Terry Papple, Automotive Worker Lawrence Zellar, Assistant Manager Jim Monnie, and Mechanic George Orlich.

I have a friend who dances on water. Jean is a FreeStyle paddler, and uses highly technical maneuvers to turn paddling into an art form.

On flat, quiet water, she uses whitewater maneuvers to add momentum, which mimic the forces that water and rocks create on moving water. She and her canoe move as one, pivoting and swooping effortlessly, like some great loon playing on the surface. Watching her graceful movement impelled me to invite her to try land dancing. It took some coaxing, but she joined me in the circle at a simple folk dance after some hesitation. As we moved to the rhythm of the music, a slight smile played on her lips, but she seemed awkward and self conscious, in the same way a loon appears clumsy when it leaves the water.

Just as Jean has difficulty sharing my joy of dancing on land, I find that I can't share her love of freestyle paddling. My canoe is not my dance partner, it is my magic carpet, conveying me to a world of solitude and beauty in the northwoods. The rhythm of my paddling is a prayer of gratitude for wild places. With each stroke of wood against water I feel part of something larger than myself, and feel an inner peace spread through me. Unlike Jean, my paddling style does not evoke beauty, but with each stroke I offer my reverence for the privilege of drinking beauty in. With each dip of the paddle I celebrate beauty before me, beauty behind me, beauty all around.

On a recent pilgrimage to the northwoods, I paddled to a granite island thrusting up from the still, dark waters of a wilderness lake. As I explored its shoreline, I caught sight of a Common Loon slipping stealthily from her nest at the waters edge. I was thrilled to witness this rare moment, but at the same time, I realized my presence created a threat to the fragile promise of life that was her egg nestled on the narrow beach. I knew that I had committed a gaffe.

Like my friend Jean, the loon is awkward on land, and she also limits her dancing to soggy ballrooms. With legs set far back on her body, the loon finds it all but impossible to walk. She must place her nest close to the water's edge to provide her a ready means of escape from would-be predators. I realized that I'd clumsily stumbled into this loon's space, and had put her egg's survival at risk.

For many people, the loon is synonymous with the northwoods wilderness. Their heavy, almost solid bones, stark black and white coloration, mysterious red eyes, and distinctive silhouette speak of an earlier age. The echo of a

I Have a Friend Who Dances on Water

loon's wail across a lake evokes feelings of timelessness. Loons are relics of the primeval, and a call to our wild selves.

Common Loons are besieged by threats that eons of evolution did not prepare them for - commercial fishing nets, lead-headed jigs, fishing lines, motor boats, and jet skis. Noisy motorized craft are easy to point to, and are responsible for many nests being destroyed in their wake, but that other symbol of the northwoods, the canoe, can be a more insidious culprit.

Weekend wilderness worshipers like me stumble across the loon's critical spring dance floor, and without intention, wreak havoc. We may never see her leave her nest and slide under the water, emerging far away from the beach. Our canoe might become a barrier between the loon and the only eggs she will lay that season, subjecting the nest to the hazards of cold and predators. The stakes are high with so few individuals in a population of birds that reproduces slowly (each pair raises only one or two chicks per season).



Kim Coudret

Loons have glided across the water for millions of years, perfectly adapted to their environment. At the turn of the century, the loon was such a common sight throughout Michigan that W.B. Barrows commented in Michigan Bird Life "There is hardly a stream or pond on which loons are not seen each season." Today, their numbers in Michigan are fewer than 600 pairs, confined primarily to the Upper Peninsula, of which only 250 reside in the northern Lower Peninsula.

My canoe and I can never hope to match the grace of my FreeStyling friend Jean, but in the future I will have a care for other dancers in the northwoods ballroom. Perhaps if I follow the same etiquette I use on a dance floor, I will make space for another generation to continue their ancient dance on the water.

Marianne Kronk

An average of nine loons fledge from Seney Refuge each year. Its sheltered pools, which are closed to all flotation devices, produce loons at success rates that are among the highest in North America. By color-banding these juvenile birds before they fledge (banded individuals have been monitored since 1987), researchers have been able to learn much about their breeding biology and population dynamics.

2003 Amateur Photo Contest Winners

Each year the Refuge and the Seney Natural History Association co-sponsor a photo contest to see how visitors capture their Refuge experience on film. Visitors vote on entries in September and October. This year 62 photos were submitted.



Al Menk

Wildlife Category

- 1st - Al Menk of Charlotte, MI
- 2nd - Al Menk of Charlotte, MI
- 3rd - Martin Rickard of Westland, MI

Recreation Category

- 1st - Jeff Wagner of Farmland, IN
- 2nd - Christyne Casselman of Newberry, MI
- 3rd - Patricia Miszewski of Cedar Springs, MI



Walter Graff

Landscape Category

- 1st - Walter Graff of Gould City, MI
- 2nd - Chris Spencer of Madison, WI
- 3rd - Jim Timmons of Marquette, MI



Jeff Wagner



Refuge Manager Casselman honors Ms. Losey as 2003 Volunteer of the Year.

Volunteer of the Year - Elizabeth Losey

A long time resident of the Seney area, Elizabeth Browne Losey's family once owned part of the Seney Refuge land. A graduate of the University of Michigan, M.S., 1946, in the new field

of Wildlife Management and Conservation, she was hired in 1947 to conduct fieldwork at the Seney National Wildlife Refuge. Mrs. Losey was the first female field biologist to be hired by the National Wildlife Refuge

System. She latter worked in Washington DC, where her ability to transcribe scientific research into popular articles was recognized by Rachel Carson.

More recently, Mrs. Losey has donated thousands of hours of time over several years to research and write a book published this year, *Seney, National Wildlife Refuge, Its Story*. She meticulously examined Refuge documents, letters, narratives, and photographs to tell in rich detail how Seney National Wildlife Refuge came to be. She generously donated her work on the book and all profits will go to support Refuge projects in education and conservation.

continued on back page

United States Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Seney National Wildlife Refuge
1674 Refuge Entrance Road
Seney, MI 49883

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Elizabeth Losey, Volunteer of the Year (continued....)

Mrs. Losey's time as a volunteer began several years ago primarily helping out with administrative functions. However, her can do attitude soon landed her many other assignments, such as greeting visitors and working at special events like the popular Children's Fishing Day. Mrs. Losey's ability to organize information and dedication to task have proved invaluable to the Refuge Biologist and Forester. She works three days a week researching documents and raw data to help them compile reports. In recognition of the thousands of hours she has donated and her monumental contribution through the book she authored, Seney National Wildlife Refuge recognized Mrs. Losey as its 2003 Volunteer of the Year.

At a young 90 years of age, Mrs. Losey didn't waste any time moving on to her next project. She has nearly completed a small publication with David Klinger at the USFWS National Conservation Training Center that will highlight the eloquent and prolific words of the Seney's first refuge manager, C.S. Johnson. In the words of Lynn Greenwalt 'Mrs. Losey is a rare creature' who exemplifies the passion and dedication of volunteers throughout the National Wildlife Refuge System.'

